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| **Flower Symbolism in China** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |   Flower symbolism is an important part of many cultures; many Westerners, for example, associate the rose with love and calla lilies with death. The symbolism of flowers is quite ancient, and many historians have traced flower symbolism through art, poetry, and music. In China and Asia, the symbolic meanings of flowers are often very important, and people must take care to give appropriate flowers as gifts or offerings in temple. The wrong flowers could be considered very offensive.   |  | | --- | |  |   Learning about flower symbolism in China can also be helpful if you are interested in Chinese art and culture. By understanding what various flowers mean, you may be able to read additional context into pieces of art. Specific flowers carry very clear meanings, and arrangements of flowers can also be important. Many art museums which specialize in Asian art have periodic displays of floral art, along with explanations of their meanings, if you are interested in learning more specifically about flowers in Chinese art.  One of the most well known Chinese flowers is the [peony](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-peony.htm), which is considered a symbol of China itself, along with the plum blossom. Chrysanthemums also appear frequently in Chinese art and flower displays, because they signify happiness, good luck, and long life. This meaning is also true in Japan. Another frequent appearance in Chinese flower symbolism is the [lotus](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-lotus.htm), which has special meaning in [Buddhism](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-buddhism.htm). Lotuses signify enlightenment and purity, since they rise from the mud to unfold into beauty. [Bamboo](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-bamboo.htm) is also associated with enlightenment, with each segment representing a step in the path to enlightenment.  Carnations are associated with marriage in China, as are orchids, which indicate fertility and abundance. [Peaches](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-peaches.htm) are associated with longevity, and their blooms are considered sacred. A gift of [narcissus](http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-narcissus.htm) indicates a desire for talent to flourish in the terms of Chinese flower symbolism, and it is considered an excellent present for someone embarking on a new career. [Hydrangeas](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-hydrangeas.htm) are said to suggest love, gratitude, and enlightenment, while the [citron](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-citron.htm) or [Buddha](http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-buddha.htm)'s hand is given for luck and happiness. Mandarin oranges with their leaves are also especially lucky, and they are often given out at Chinese New Year.  If you are considering a gift of flowers to someone of Chinese descent, remember that odd numbers of flowers are considered somewhat unlucky. A gift of a pair or even number is appropriate, since it suggests wishes of good fortune and happiness. You should also avoid giving white flowers, because this color symbolizes tears, death and [mourning](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-mourning.htm). Red is a particularly lucky and favorite color in much of China, and it is very appropriate for weddings |